

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000373

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL CY TU MARR

SUBJECT: TURKS MULLING NATO/EU PROBLEM BUT NOT YET READY  
FOR COMPROMISE

REF: 04 ANKARA 6402

Classified By: DCM Robert S. Deutsch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

**¶1.** (C) Summary: Our recent conversations with MFA and TGS officials reveal that some thought is being given to how to resolve the impasse created by Turkey's strict interpretation of NAC decisions that excludes from Berlin Plus-related discussions those EU members who are not parties to a NATO security agreement nor members in PFP. While officials working on alliance matters understand the negative impact Turkey's position is having on NATO-EU relations, their seniors are still putting more weight on the Cyprus issue. Ankara's disappointment that the EU has not lived up to its expectations to ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots and the GOT's displeasure at Nicosia's attempt to use the EU to force Turkey's recognition of Cyprus will need to dissipate further before the GOT will be ready to consider compromises. End Summary.

**¶2.** (C) The DCM raised the NATO-EU impasse over the participation of Cyprus and Malta when he called on the new MFA Director General for International Security Affairs Tomur Bayer on Jan. 18. Bayer, who has long experience working on NATO affairs, asserted that the wording of the North Atlantic Council decisions setting out the conditions for non-alliance members to participate in discussions of Berlin-Plus issues were carefully considered and came the day after the EU issued its own decisions on the subject. Thus, allies understood and intended the differences between the NATO and EU decisions. That said, Bayer conceded that NATO-EU relations were suffering, weakening the transatlantic relationship and risking duplication of EU and NATO efforts. Therefore, "we want to find a way to deepen NATO-EU relations," he said. The problem was being considered "at a technical level" Bayer continued. MFA was consulting with "other authorities" (read: the military) and would likely have to consult with ministers. At this stage, it was not possible to give an indication of what Turkey might be willing to do or when it might do it.

**¶3.** (C) The DCM acknowledged that relevant NATO and EU documents were not totally in agreement. That said, the continued impasse only served those who wanted greater divisions between NATO and the EU. The Berlin Plus arrangements were designed for a specific set of activities. For issues unrelated to Berlin-Plus, Turkey should find a way to permit cooperation between the two institutions. Bayer took the point, but recalled that on issues like Dafur and the Ukraine, certain statements (not further defined) from European Commission officials made compromise difficult. The DCM concluded by noting that as Turkey thinks about ways to resolve this issue the USG stood ready to assist in the brainstorming.

**¶4.** (C) Earlier conversations with other MFA officials suggest that brainstorming is occurring among NATO policy officials. Judging by his comments to visiting EUR DAS Kennedy on January 12, Deputy Undersecretary Ahmet Uzumcu, formerly Turkey's permrep to NATO, is also contributing to the process despite neither NATO nor Cyprus being in his new portfolio. Uzumcu said the MFA would probably come up with some progress, but it would be less than expectations. In fact, NATO Department Head Alper Coskun told PolMilCouns on January 10 that his department was gaining little traction in moving this issue with senior officials who are still smarting about Nicosia's efforts against a Cyprus settlement. He and his staff were trying to come up with some creative ideas to get around the opposition, lamenting that suggestions from Europeans to date had been no more than "just let the Cypriots participate." He thought some more time would be needed to dissipate the anger felt toward Cyprus over its refusal to approve the settlement on the island last Spring. The same is evidently true in the military -- on January 13 TGS/J5 LtGen Aydogan Babaoglu told the DCM, "the NAC decided the matter; we are happy with that."

**¶5.** (C) Comment: Unfortunately, progress on Cyprus is unlikely to contribute towards resolving the NATO/EU problem. Turkish MFA thinking on Cyprus is unable to get around the political obstacles posed by the perceived lack of positive international response to Turkish Cypriot approval of the April referendum. MFA Deputy U/S Apakan, whose portfolio includes Cyprus, told DAS Kennedy January 12 that the GOT is exchanging internal views on next steps to try to get the

settlement process re-started, but cannot see how it could accept less than the Annan Plan as voted on April 24. MFA Northeastern Mediterranean Affairs acting DDG Bilman consistently tells us that perceived lack of measures to ameliorate Turkish Cypriots' isolation undermines pro-settlement sentiment in the GOT and the bureaucracy and prevents Turkey from offering further concessions.

¶6. (C) Comment cont.: The way the EU and Turkey are interacting adds to the problem. The EU members feel aggrieved at Turkey's stonewalling on Cyprus at its December summit. Similarly, the EU's handling of the Cyprus issue at the summit rekindled Ankara's resentment of Nicosia's blocking of a Cyprus settlement and of the EU for not doing enough to ease the isolation of Turkish Cypriots. For now, many in Ankara see barring Cyprus from NATO/EU activities as one of the few sticks it has to use against the ROC. With time, this may pass. However, the extremely legalistic GOT would be more likely to concede Cypriot participation in an activity that clearly was not covered by Berlin Plus and that would not require the discussion of classified information. Anything more, we fear, would require changing the NAC decisions, something Turkey is unlikely to consider in the current environment. End comment.

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